



## Neighbourhood action critical to meeting net zero targets – say C40 Cities and Arup

- **New guidebook provides a framework for green and thriving neighbourhoods, offering a pathway to net zero using ‘15-minute city’ principles**
- **Guidebook urges more sustainable lifestyles, inclusive communities, and the creation of green jobs**
- **Global call for pilot neighbourhoods to test the ‘green and thriving neighbourhoods’ framework through ten recommended approaches**

**09 September 2021.**

Ahead of international climate negotiations at COP26, Arup and C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group have released a new guidebook highlighting the importance of neighbourhood action in tackling the climate crisis.

The guidebook - the first of its kind to offer a framework and approach for delivering net zero at the neighbourhood scale - is aimed at city authorities, developers and communities and can be applied in both new and existing neighbourhoods globally.

The authors of the guidebook urge that action at a neighbourhood level is needed to accelerate progress to net zero, warning that targets otherwise risk being missed. Rather than waiting for a top-down approach from central governments, local projects can provide an urban test bed to trial innovative approaches, including in design and construction, in the use of technology and crucially in driving the positive engagement and participation of citizens and communities.

With communities around the world increasingly witnessing the impact of heatwaves or extreme flooding, there is a need for local strategies, policies and projects that provide opportunities for direct community participation in the fight against climate change. This – of course - needs to happen in parallel with the broader systemic change being advocated for on the international stage.

The guidebook sets out ten key approaches to deliver green and thriving neighbourhoods and help create 15-minute cities. The 15-minute city urban planning principle encourages essential amenities within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from peoples’ homes, improving accessibility and inclusivity – which are central goals of the guidebook’s recommendations. The 15-minute city concept has taken on renewed impetus during the Covid-19 pandemic, as so many people have relied on their local community and amenities.

The approaches in the guidebook aim to focus on the end-user – residents, workers and visitors – and draw on best practice thinking and successful projects in cities across the world, such as in Paris, San Francisco, and Nanjing. The types of actions the guidebook recommends include:

- **Celebrating adaptable spaces that can be used by all residents**, providing a compact neighbourhood. For example, London’s Haringey Council has been using **Blue House Yard** site (previously vacant) to provide affordable workspaces for small businesses, together with public

spaces. This project has made use of existing infrastructure to support community networks and create jobs.

- **Promoting people centred streets and mobility** by prioritizing active travel over the private car. For example, **the Superblocks programme** in Barcelona uses temporary street furniture and painted road markings to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists and to introduce mobile tree planters that green the streets and provide shade. In the first Superblock (Poblenou) the areas occupied by cars reduced by 48% and the green area increased by 91%, whilst economic activity in the area at street level increased.
- **Promoting clean construction** by repurposing and refurbishing infrastructure assets to avoid demolition and using low-carbon materials. For example, the **Collective for Climate Project** in Paris' La Porte de Montreuil neighbourhood aims to reduce 85% of operational and embodied emissions and require all buildings to be adaptable or reversible.
- **Investing in neighbourhood-wide energy infrastructure** to generate, store and share clean energy for buildings in the district and beyond. For example, L'Innesto in Milan will be the first **Zero Carbon "Housing Sociale"** district in Italy, with the development of an innovative 4th generation neighbourhood heating system, powered by renewable sources (including an urban waste water heat-recovery system) and the design of Nearly Zero Energy Buildings.
- **Using green and nature-based solutions** to support biodiversity, improve air quality and foster physical and mental wellbeing. For example, the **Corredores Verdes**, an interconnected network of greenspace in Medellin, Colombia, has reduced the impact from urban heat, planted over 8,800 trees and facilitated 75 citizens from disadvantaged backgrounds to access training to become city gardeners.

By beginning with the easy and low-cost interventions at a neighbourhood scale, cities can build momentum in support of city-wide emission reduction targets and attract funding and investment for larger-scale projects.

With 55% of the world's population already living in cities, the authors have launched a call to action to stakeholders and cities across the globe to identify suitable neighbourhoods that could embrace the green and thriving neighbourhoods model and act as a catalyst for climate action at city, national or international level.

**Ben Smith, Director for Energy and Climate Change Consulting at Arup, said:** *"With COP26 around the corner and the Race to Zero underway, we believe there are great opportunities to deliver emissions reductions in neighbourhoods around the world – both existing and new. Crucially, this scale of project can provide opportunities for innovation – in policy, in the use of technology and in community engagement and participation. We know that the next decade is critical in terms of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions – we must act now to create green and thriving neighbourhoods around the world."*



**Mark Watts, Executive Director of C40 Cities, said:** *“Green and Thriving Neighbourhoods’ provide a template for the way people want to live as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, enshrining access to essential services and public luxury alike so that everyone can share in growing prosperity and, crucially, providing a framework for pollution-free neighbourhoods that will enable cities to eliminate the emissions that are causing our climate emergency. I am delighted that C40 and Arup are together leading on this exciting new vision, working with cities to revitalise and transform the places we call home.”*

**Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, Mayor of Buenos Aires and Vice-Chair of C40 Cities, said:** *“As urban populations increase, we know that compact and connected communities are the best way to preserve global resources and fragile biodiversity. We must harness a model for low-carbon urban development that is human-scale, thriving and inclusive for our future; a model that promotes sustainable and equitable neighbourhoods that citizens and their leaders can strive for and then replicate it widely.”*

**Anna König Jerlmyr, Mayor of Stockholm and Vice-Chair of C40 Cities, said:** *“The neighbourhood scale in a city offers some unique opportunities to accelerate towards net zero. Taking advantage of the balance between scale and agility, neighbourhood projects can pioneer new policy, trial innovative partnership arrangements, consider creative ways to increase citizen participation and test new technologies or products that can support the overarching vision. Developing neighbourhood demonstrators that set a positive vision of cities’ low carbon future, can be a strong catalyst for change.”*

**Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris and former chair of C40 Cities said:** *“There is an appetite for more liveable, people- oriented cities that has been reinforced by the Covid-19 crisis, driving a surge of interest in the ‘15-minute city’. A green and thriving neighbourhood should enable residents of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to meet their daily needs close to home. It should support the local economy and green jobs, provides opportunities to walk, cycle and takes public transport, offer better waste management solutions and cleaner energy systems and incorporate green infrastructure - all of which contribute to accelerating climate action, while benefiting other critical urban agendas, such as promoting equity, prosperity, resilience and quality of life.”*

**\*\*ENDS\*\***



**Notes to editors:**

**About Arup**

Arup is the creative force at the heart of many of the world's most prominent projects in the built environment and across industry. Working in more than 140 countries, the firm's designers, engineers, architects, planners, consultants and technical specialists work with our clients on innovative projects of the highest quality and impact.

[www.arup.com](http://www.arup.com)

**About C40 Cities**

C40 is a network of the world's megacities committed to addressing climate change. C40 supports cities to collaborate effectively, share knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change.

Around the world, C40 Cities connects 97 of the world's greatest cities to take bold climate action, leading the way towards a healthier and more sustainable future. Representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe.

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